



Extension of 1% Sales Tax for Education

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Position Statement:

The State of Iowa Youth Advisory Council supports extending the 1% SAVE (Secure Advancement Value Education) tax that is currently issued solely to Iowa's public schools from 2008 to 2029 until 2049.

Position

It is the position of the State of Iowa Youth Advisory Council, the voice of the young citizens of Iowa, that the 1% SAVE (Secure Advancement Value Education) tax that is currently issued solely to Iowa's public schools from 2008 to 2029 to should be extended till 2049. This legislation would allow all schools in Iowa to offer many educational opportunities for students, complete renovation projects, and borrow money for future projects. Extension of the 1% sales tax till 2049 will also ensure that Iowa gains a place as a top state for K-12 education in the country.

Rationale

In today's competitive world, it is vital for the youth of Iowa to have a strong base in education. While one can be deprived of almost anything, education is one thing that cannot be taken away. In 2015, Iowa ranked 24th out of 50 states in Education Week's National Report Card (edweek.org). This ranking evidences mediocrity and must be greatly improved. Removing or reducing the 1% tax toward education following 2029 will push our state further towards the bottom of the list.

When continued funding is granted to schools, it will raise the academic initiatives of educators and students alike. Logistics for educational competitions beyond the school walls can be coordinated with greater ease. High quality textbooks and technology can be purchased to enhance student education. Fund from the tax can be used for school renovations or construction of athletic centers. Additionally, in order for schools across Iowa to borrow against the projected money from the sales tax they need at least 20 years of future funding. Right now they have much less time for future funds to be guaranteed through the sales tax (SAVE). This is a need for many of the districts in our state. For example, the Dubuque Community School District has used the SAVE tax to extend citywide school bus systems to purchasing new student textbooks and technology. Numerous other school districts, including but not limited to, the Davenport School District, Des Moines Public Schools, and Waukee School District are passionate advocates for an extension of the SAVE Tax.

An Iowa State University Extension report released back in February indicated that 2.1% of the dollars collected through SAVE are allocated by state law directly to targeted property tax relief. In addition, school districts may allocate SAVE funds to "buy down" property tax rates from other infrastructure levies

Additionally, all schools in our state will be able to offer the maximum number of Advance Placement (AP) classes to its students. Preserving the 1% sales tax will be a source of motivation for public schools. It will ensure that our state gets back to the top in student achievement for generations to come.

Recommended Action

Educational funding is a statewide, national, and global solution for growth. SIYAC believes that the 1% state tax that is currently given solely to public schools education should be extended till 2049. While pressing expenditures in areas other than education may arise, it is vital that our state leaders persistently emphasize the need for Iowa's educational system to rise to the top.

As the voice of youth across the State of Iowa, SIYAC believes that a comprehensive education funding in public schools will help ensure that schools, educators, and students reach their maximum potential. This extension will also ensure that schools have the opportunity to complete projects to better the academic, athletic and artistic options for students. Adding twenty more years to the SAVE tax is one crucial step to enacting educational reform and success in Iowa.

Sources

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Mr. Tom Narak, Iowa Department of Education

Mrs. Kelli Soyer, DMPS Action Board

Mr. Jim Pochaska, Dubuque Community School District

Rep. Charles Isenhardt, Iowa Legislature